

# Cultural CONNECTION

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COUNTY OF ORANGE  
HEALTH CARE AGENCY

## THIRD ANNUAL MULTICULTURAL CONFERENCE 2002

This year's multicultural conference entitled "Best Practices with Diverse Populations: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" was held on March 5 at the Irvine Marriott. Director Julie Poulson gave a warm welcome and reminisced about three previously held multicultural conferences to an estimated 600 participants from one hundred agencies, eight counties and seven universities. Mental Health Director Douglas Barton highlighted the rich diversity of Orange County and HCA's continued commitment to multicultural issues. The theme of "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" was followed by Dr. Susan Mandel who gave a historical background of the roots of Pacific Clinics in community mental health.

Dr. Robert Guthrie gave a thought-provoking keynote address and accentuated the struggle of Black Psychology to have a voice in mental health. Dr. Guthrie is one of the founding Fathers of Black Psychology and has been instrumental in the development of the field of cross-cultural mental health. The morning session was rounded out by Dr. David Kinzie's talk on the impact of the 9/11 tragedy and reactivation of post-traumatic stress symptoms among refugees clients.

This year's conference offered three full sessions of workshops addressing a variety of topics. It also marked the first time that paper sessions were held and showcased some of the latest research and work on



*Conference attendees enjoy a wonderful lunch.*



*HCA Director Julie Poulson and Behavioral Health Services Director Doug Barton share a few moments with keynote speaker, Dr. Robert Guthrie.*

multicultural issues in Southern California. We would like to thank all of those individuals that attended this year's conference. A special thanks to Refugio Para Niños and the Mental Health Association for their generous sponsorship. Hope to see you all next March 12 at the Irvine Marriott!

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## THIRD ANNUAL MULTICULTURAL CONFERENCE 2002

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*Dr. Robert Guthrie gave an inspirational keynote address.*



*Dr. J. David Kinzie expounding on the reactivation of posttraumatic stress syndrome among refugees.*



*Workshop session in process.*



*Exhibitors from AP AIDS Intervention and O.C.'s Human Resources.*



*Doug Barton—morning remarks.*

## MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

In celebration of May as Mental Health Month we will be holding a special training on the first of the month. We have invited **Dr. Stanley Sue** to speak on mental health issues particularly as they apply to multicultural populations. Dr. Sue was one of the authors who contributed to the Surgeon General's report entitled "Mental Health: Race, Culture and Ethnicity." Dr. Sue has been a pioneer in the field of "minority mental health" and has published extensively on issues relevant to culturally different populations. His famous research on utilization patterns of multicultural populations continues to serve as the foundation for mental health professionals, researchers, and educators. In various studies dating back to 1974 he found that an astonishing 50% of minorities terminate mental health counseling after the first session. As one of the founding fathers of Asian American psychology and multicultural psychology, his work bears testament to the advances that the field has made today. He is professor of psychiatry and psychology and director of Asian American Studies program at the University of California, Davis.



## STIGMA IN MENTAL HEALTH

Although many circumstances prevent a person from seeking mental health treatment, by far the most difficult obstacle to hurdle is **stigma**. In a perfect world, an individual would have comprehensive health insurance which would cover all phases of mental health treatment, including medication; job training that would enable positive employment skills to be developed, along with job placement and flexibility to maintain physician appointments; affordable housing that would allow someone on a limited income to survive; and a strong support system that would be there when the illness reared its ugly head. All this being said, the number one culprit that prevents access to treatment still remains **stigma**.

Stigma, "a cluster of negative attitudes and beliefs that motivate the general public to fear, reject, avoid and discriminate against people with mental illness" (Corrigan & Penn, 1999) causes those with mental illness to become so ashamed that symptoms are concealed and treatment is avoided. It decreases access to resources and support systems, contributing to decreased self esteem. Stigma extends to the entire family system, and can result in families being so ashamed that they deny, or hide the mentally ill family member for fear that the illness will reflect badly on the family as a whole. This is particularly true in culturally diverse families.

A cross cultural research study done in Los Angeles by Zhang, Snowden and Sue in 1998 looked at differences between Asians and Caucasians in their help seeking and utilization patterns. The results demonstrated that 12% of Asians would mention their mental health issues to a friend or relative,

compared to 25 % of Caucasians. Only 4% of Asians would seek help from a psychiatrist or specialist versus 26 % of Caucasians. Additionally, only 3% of Asians would seek help from a physician, compared to 13% of Caucasians.

In 1996 the General Social Survey, the largest and most comprehensive study of stigma, was done in the United States. The participants were asked to respond to various vignettes depicting people with mental illness. The participants generally viewed them as more dangerous and incompetent to handle their own affairs. The harshest judged were those labeled as suffering from Schizophrenia and addictions. It is interesting to note that neither the ethnicity of the person in the vignette nor the ethnicity of the respondent seemed to influence the degree of stigma. In other words, mentally ill people were seen in a negative light across all ethnicities. In fact, other studies have demonstrated that people of color hold stronger stigmatizing attitudes towards mental illness than Caucasians (Whaley, 1997).

Effective campaigns to target social obstacles, such as stigma, to mental health treatment are in need. Education can assist in breaking down stigma. Yet this education is most effective when it occurs in the culturally diverse communities, with "cultural allies," such as leaders in that community. Clinicians would do well to keep in mind that stigma may be the "resistance" that is encountered in therapy, either in a subtle or in an obvious manner. Understanding the way in which mental illness is understood by the client ( and family) in a cultural context will also assist the clinician in providing appropriate treatment.

# Cultural Events Calendar

Event	April 24-27, 2002 <b>Mediation Certification Training</b>	Information: Alfonso Clarke (714) 567-7470
Event	May 7-13, 2002 <b>National Mental Health Counseling Week</b>	
Event	May 16, 2002 <b>Celebrate Santa Ana</b> Location: Double Tree Hotel – Santa Ana Admission: Free	Information: Regan M. Candelario (714) 667-2279
Event	May 22, 2002 <b>Mental Health Board Public Forum</b> Location: Hall of Administration	Information: Judy Griset (714) 834-5481
Event	May 23, 2002 <b>Alternative Treatment for Latinos</b> Location: Whittier Hilton Admission: \$55.00 by deadline May 10, 2002	Information: Blanca Padilla (626) 433-1311
Event	May 30, 2002 <b>Meeting of the Minds</b> Location: Disneyland Hotel, Anaheim	Information: Sandy Cusmanos (714) 547-7559
Event	May 31, 2002 <b>World No-Tobacco Day</b>	
Event	May 2002 <b>Building Bridges Award</b>	Information: OCHRC (714) 567-7470
Event	June 11-17, 2002 <b>National Men's Health Week</b>	
Event	June 27, 2002 <b>National HIV Testing Day</b>	



# Spotlight on Excellence

## JANUARY HONOREE—MARY MORRIS



ADAS Supervisor Brett O'Brien; Ronnie Kelley, Cultural Competency; Mary Morris; Rafael D. Canul, Cultural Competency.

**M**ary Morris has worked for the Orange County Health Care Agency for the past 18½ years. She began her career in Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services as a Mental Health Specialist and is currently a Service Chief II. She received her Masters Degree in Psychology and is a licensed Marriage Family Therapist.

Per her colleagues, "Mary is honoring and knowledgeable about the significance of culture." One example of her dedication to cultural competency is her promotion of a program of recovery in Spanish and Vietnamese. Mary is supportive and sensitive to cultural issues related to quality of service, always honoring the client and his/her needs.

## FEBRUARY HONOREE—VIJAY BHAKTA



Behavioral Health Services Director Doug Barton; Patients Rights Coordinator Frank Murillo; Vijay Bhakta; Ronnie Kelley, Cultural Competency; Kary To, Cultural Competency.

**V**ijay Bhakta has been with the Health Care Agency for almost 1½ years. He currently serves as a Consumer Liaison in the Office of Patients Rights. Being a client himself, Vijay always wanted to connect with others who shared similar stories. Vijay acts as a liaison between the client and the Patients Rights staff.

Per his colleagues, "Vijay always takes into consideration the culture of the client. He is dedicated to providing quality care to clients of all cultures."

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## SPOTLIGHT ON EXCELLENCE

(Continued from page 5)

# MARCH HONOREE— HOLLY HAN



BHS Director Doug Barton; Holly Han; ADAS Service Chief Kate Pavich; Ronnie Kelley, Cultural Competency; Rafael D. Canul, Cultural Competency.

Holly Han has worked for the Health care Agency for the past 2½ years. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Pitzer College and her Masters degree in Psychology from Chapman University. She currently serves as an MFT II with Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services at the Youth and Family Resource Center in Westminster. Holly developed a Resource manual for the Identification and Treatment of Asian gang members, her area of expertise. Per her colleagues, when interacting with staff and clients, she always pays attention to both individual and cultural needs.



## Spotlight on Excellence



Do you work with someone who exemplifies Cultural Competency? Someone who is both sensitive and respectful to persons of all cultures, whether colleague or consumer? If so, the Cultural Competency Program would like to formally acknowledge these individuals.

Please fill out the necessary information and pony it back to us and we'll make sure this employee or consumer gets acknowledged in our next newsletter. Our pony address is 38-P.

Awardees will be honored at the County's Mental Health Advisory Board Meeting. Thank you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Work address/ Pony address: \_\_\_\_\_

Discipline: \_\_\_\_\_

Why you believe he/she is Culturally Competent:

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Example of dedication to Cultural Competency:

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# THE MULTIETHNIC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES TASK FORCE: OUR COMMUNITIES' VOICES AT WORK

Rowena Gillo-Gonzales, L.C.S.W.  
Chair, Multi-Ethnic Behavioral Services Task Force

**W**ho is—and *what* is—the Multiethnic Behavioral Health Services Task Force? What does it do? All very good questions for which I, as current Chair of this pioneering Task Force, am privileged to answer.

Established in 1989, the Multiethnic Behavioral Health Services Task Force (METF) was invited by the Health Care Agency to develop, implement, and evaluate high quality behavioral health services for the growing diverse communities in Orange County. The only known "multiethnic task force" within the State of California, Orange County's Multiethnic Task Force acts as an advisory board to the Director of Behavioral Health Services on issues pertaining to cultural competency, capability and ethnic diversity.

Our charge and mission: *"To advocate for the development, implementation and evaluation of high quality, culturally competent, behavioral health services (Mental Health Services and Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services) capable of meeting the dynamic and diverse needs of all ethnic groups in Orange County."*

The Multiethnic Task Force continues its collaborative relationship with the County's Cultural Competency & Multiethnic Services Departments, Service Chief/Ethnic Services Coordinator, Veronica Kelley, LCSW and her staff at the Cultural Competency Department.

Designed to comprise a sample of ethnically and culturally diverse "voices" from the Orange County com-

munities, Task Force membership includes representation from a wide range of treatment providers, community organizations and its leaders, as well as consumer advocates. The composition of the current Task Force board members is a great illustration of this philosophy: representation from Orange County's diverse community "voices." As Chair of the Task Force, I represent Pacific Clinics, a nonprofit behavioral health services organization. Vice-Chair Ellen Ahn, JD, represents the Korean Community (K.C.) Services organization, and is also a current member of the Alcohol & Drug Advisory Board. Subcommittee Chair of Research & Training Michael Gonzales, Ph.D., represents the Aspen Community Services/College Health, another behavioral health services organization. Paula Fitzgerald, Subcommittee Chair of Legislative Advocacy, represents the Children & Youth Services Division of Behavioral Health Services as a Parent Advocate. Ginger Armstrong, Subcommittee Chair of Membership, represents Olive Crest, an organization that focuses on group home, residential, foster care agencies and transitional housing for children and adolescents. Last but certainly not least is the Task Force Staff Assistant/Board Secretary, Judy Griset, who also supports the Mental Health and Alcohol & Drug Advisory Boards.

The Multiethnic Task Force meets regularly on the first Wednesday of the month, from 10:00 to 12:00 pm at 1300 So. Grand Avenue in the City of Santa Ana. Training on cultural competency

and ethnic diversity, as well as the opportunity to hear directly from the Behavioral Health Services Director, Doug Barton, regarding behavioral health updates are frequent items on the Task Force's meeting agenda.

While the Task Force meetings are open to the public, membership is by invitation only. Direct consumers of behavioral health services, interested family members and education groups continue to be welcomed for membership. For more information on membership and/or the Multiethnic Behavioral Health Services Task Force, please contact Judy Griset at (714) 834-5481.

On behalf of the Multiethnic Behavioral Health Services, I invite all of you to visit us during our meetings. We look forward to hearing your community's "voice" in areas related to your community's unique cultural and ethnic need.



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